

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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NEWS BRIEFS FROM THE FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Final Environmental Impact Statement on Outer Banks Released. The final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) has been released on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's proposal to establish a national wildlife refuge on the Currituck Outer Banks of North Carolina.

The Service's Northeast Regional Office has proposed the purchase or acquisition of interest in all lands from the Virginia-North Carolina state line to the north edge of the village of Corolla to the Dare County line. Most of the land could be secured with conservation easements. Upland portions would be purchased with permanent residents and their children retaining life use. Part-time residents could use their property for 25 years if they had approved permits to build homes before December 31, 1979.

This proposal would provide protection for habitat used by thousands of waterfowl wintering in Currituck Sound, as well as such endangered species as the bald eagle, peregrine falcon, and loggerhead turtle. The Service began to develop its proposal when it became apparent that fish and wildlife resources of the area were being threatened as a result of intensive efforts to develop the Currituck spit for recreational, second home, or retirement home use.

The FEIS includes some major changes from the Draft EIS issued in December, 1979. An additional alternative to the Service's preferred action--to expand acquisition to include all the undeveloped upland south of Corolla to the Dare County line--was added in response to comments by conservation groups and the general public. Concerns expressed by Governor Hunt and Currituck County officials have also been addressed in the report.

The Service spent nearly 20 months and conducted five public meetings or hearings in developing their proposal and alternatives. Affected landowners, the general public, State and local governing bodies, elected officials, conservation groups, and Federal and State agencies all participated in the decision-making process.

Copies of the Final Environmental Impact Statement will be available for public review at city libraries in Virginia Beach and at the Currituck County Courthouse in Currituck, NC. Individuals and organizations who have already requested copies will receive them by mail. Additional copies may be requested from: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, One Gateway Center, Suite 700, Newton Corner, MA 02158, Attention: David E. Janes, Office of Realty.

A final decision on the proposal cannot be made until the expiration of a 30-day comment period following release of the FEIS. These comments should be sent to Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D.C. 20240.

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Draft Environmental Impact Statement on Management of Russell Refuge Available for Public Review. Alternatives for future management of the Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge have been published in a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) by the Fish and Wildlife Service for public review and comment.

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The primary purpose of the million-dollar refuge, established in 1936, is to provide habitat for a variety of wildlife species. Proposed management actions are designed to improve wildlife habitat from fair, to good or excellent by the year 2000.

Within the refuge's boundaries are three State parks, recreation areas administered by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, part of the Upper Missouri Wild and Scenic River administered by the Bureau of Land Management, and the 249,000-acre Ft. Peck Reservoir.

Copies of the DEIS may be obtained by writing the Regional Director (RW), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, P.O. Box 25486, DFC, Denver, Colorado 80225. Written statements regarding the documents will be accepted through November 17, and should be addressed to the Area Manager, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Room 3035, Federal Building, 316 North 26th Avenue, Billings, Montana, 59101.

In addition, three public hearings in Montana and one in Washington, D.C. have been scheduled in late September and early October, to receive oral comments. Public hearings will be held as follows:

--MISSOULA, MT: Monday, September 29, 7:00 p.m., Village Red Lion Motor Inn, 100 Madison.

--LEWISTOWN, MT: Tuesday, September 30, 7:00 p.m., Civic Center, 309 Fifth Avenue South.

--GLASCOW, MT: Wednesday, October 1, 7:00 p.m., County Court Room, Valley County Court House.

--WASHINGTON, D.C.: Tuesday, October 7, 10:00 a.m., Auditorium Main Interior Building, 18th & C Streets N.W.

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Publication Available

Avian Abodes. "Homes for Birds", one of the Federal Government's most popular wildlife publications, has just been revised and reprinted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The new version, an update of the 1969 edition, offers tips to bird enthusiasts on building and placing the various types and styles of houses for the most common species of American songbirds. Simple blueprints, complete with dimensions and instructions for the novice carpenter, are provided in the 22-page brochure. It also suggests ways to protect songbirds and their homes from natural predators during nesting season.

"Homes for Birds" (Conservation Bulletin 14) is available for \$1.75 from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

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